

Sioux City Journal

June 9, 2005

Sioux City groups will work to be named Great Place By [Bret Hayworth](#) Journal staff writer

Sioux City won't be left out in the attempt by various areas of Iowa to be recognized as a Great Place in a new state initiative.

Three places possessing unique characteristics will be picked to be improved and promoted, and a few Sioux City groups will work cooperatively to have downtown Sioux City named a Great Place.

The last of 10 public forums explaining the process of becoming one of the three Great Places was held at the downtown Sioux City Martin Ballroom Thursday.

The forums, including one in Spencer last month, have been attended by at least 1,000 Iowans. Those wanting to push an area for Great Places designation have until July 1 to contact the state.

The forum drew representatives from several towns, including Le Mars, Sioux Center, Onawa, Mapleton, Carroll and Manning. Under the leadership of Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs director Anita Walker, the attendees were encouraged to name national places that fit the Great Places bill, having a unique feel or sense of place as a combination of natural resources or manmade entities.

Places like New York City, Williamsburg, Va. and Mount Rushmore were brainstormed, and Kingsley, Iowa, resident Julie Hlas mentioned Seattle, for its standing as "a culturally, socially rich area." Taking it down to Iowa, the people mentioned Great Places possibilities as the Loess Hills, Amana Colonies, the Grotto of Redemption near West Bend and Valley Junction in Polk County, for its unique shops.

Then the list got more parochial. Downtown Partners executive director Roger Caudron mentioned Sioux City, particularly for the restored Orpheum Theater, which he called "the classiest place to see a show in the Midwest."

After the forum, Caudron said Downtown Partners would be working with the Siouxiand Chamber of Commerce, city of Sioux City and the Sioux City Growth Organization, a group of young professionals, to put forth downtown Sioux City as a possible Great Place.

Caudron said the invitation to pick Sioux City would be "based on downtown as the centrality of the application." While Walker said it was conceivable a place like Sioux City could have several projects, Caudron said he wasn't sure if other Sioux City groups might put forth a competing Great Places area.

Caudron said the proposal may not be limited to downtown, but might have "tentacles" to farther away areas like the riverfront, Sergeant Floyd Monument and Trinity Heights. Caudron said "I'm a little biased," but said he thinks Sioux City could fare well in the hands of the Great Places Citizen Advisory Board. "There are more great places in Iowa, and we just feel we are the greatest," he said. "We are a destination, one of the better kept secrets in Iowa."

To date, only one area has sent in an invitation to be considered a Great Place. But Walker said she expects many, and said with the July 1 deadline, "they will all come in on June 30."

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